

the landscape, many of the authors suggest an approach to using prescribed fire that does not involve burning all the available acres in a short time period, but rather at a variety of temporal and spatial scales to produce a mosaic of different habitat and age classes. This well-reasoned approach to maintaining variation in the landscape might contrast with some practices, such as the large-scale application of frequent understory fires (as is typical in southwestern pine forests) in the Rocky Mountains, where a stand-replacing fire might be an objective.

Like most treatises on fire ecology, this one makes the obligatory call for less fire suppression with statements like "... it clearly seems reactive to continue battling naturally ignited fires burning within historic ranges of severity." Although understandable, such statements fail to appreciate the current impracticality of letting most wildfires burn, considering that modern wildlands comprise a complex mix of fire-adapted vegetation, small remnant patches of vulnerable special habitats (e.g., riparian and stands of old-growth forest), areas of increased flammability due to the presence of exotic plants and other buildups of fuels, and at-risk investments (e.g., conifer plantations and other anthropogenic improvements). Such a landscape, combined with dynamic weather patterns, a political atmosphere driven by special interest groups (e.g., proponents of scenic values for tourism), public health (e.g., smoke management) and safety concerns, and an increasingly litigious society make risk-averse decision makers unlikely to push too hard for expanded let-burn policies any time soon. While many authors call for expanded prescribed burning programs, large-scale application of fire as the primary fuels treatment could only be done with massive (and seemingly unlikely) increases in prescribed fire budgets. Thus, although fire is an appealing treatment for ecosystem restoration and management, it seems likely that mechanical thinning, livestock grazing, and other treatments intended as surrogates for fire will provide land managers with solutions over the short run, so researchers should probably look a bit harder at such options. However, since much of the discussion in this volume deals with responses of birds to habitat change, not necessarily their responses to fire, *per se*, the

information provided will facilitate planning for, and implementation of, a range of habitat treatments.

In light of the ongoing public debate regarding forest health and fire, especially welcome was a statement contrasting the effects of fuels treatments involving commercial harvest of large trees with those treatments intended to remove highly combustible, small-diameter fuels. We can only hope that forest managers also heed the cautions provided by many authors on post-fire salvage logging, which can easily reverse any benefits the burn may have provided to certain groups of birds, especially cavity-nesters.

*Fire and Avian Ecology in North America* will be an interesting and useful addition to the reference libraries of agency biologists, fire managers, ecologists, and others involved in fire and fuels issues. I recommend this book.—JOHN E. HUNTER, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata, California; e-mail: John.E.Hunter@fws.gov

**BIRDS OF WESTERN AFRICA.** By Nik Borrow and Ron Demey. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 2004: 512 pp., 147 color plates, 3,000+ color illustrations. ISBN: 0691123217. \$40.00 (paper).—*Birds of Western Africa*, by N. Borrow and R. Demey, was originally published in 2001 by Christopher Helm, London (hard cover), whereas this volume was released as part of the Princeton Field Guide series (soft cover). This magnificent field guide covers all 1,285 species of birds found within the present region of Western Africa, which the authors define as extending from Senegal and southern Mauritania east to Chad and the Central Africa Republic, and south to Congo, including Cape Verde and the Gulf of Guinea islands. A color-shaded map shows the location of each country.

The introduction provides information on changes to scientific and common names, including standardizations of English names, made since the 2001 publication. Name changes are those recommended by David and Gosselin (David, N. and M. Gosselin. 2002. Gender agreement of avian species names. *Bulletin of the British Ornithology Club* 122: 257–282) (David, N. and M. Gosselin. 2002.

The grammatical gender of avian genera. *Bulletin of the British Ornithology Club* 122:14–49). The introduction is followed by an excellent review of the climate, topography, habitats, and restricted ranges of certain species; a glossary of terms; and excellent illustrations and descriptions for morphological terminology. Western Africa has no fewer than 87 restricted-range species occurring in 7 areas of avian endemism, including the Cape Verde Islands, Annobón, São Tomé, Príncipe, Upper Guinea forests, Cameroon and Gabon lowlands, and Cameroon mountains. Another four species are considered confined to restricted-range areas in the Upper Niger valley, southwest Nigeria, the Lower Niger valley, and the Gabon–Cabinda coastal area. For the regions noted above, the authors list the species that are highly threatened.

For each species, the authors provide a color distribution map and authoritative descriptions of distinctive characteristics needed to identify the species. For nearly all species, they also provide color illustrations of the species. All the illustrations in this compact field guide were rendered by the same acclaimed bird artist, Nik Borrow, and their layout is similar to that of the Peterson Field Guides; however, they lack Peterson's arrows pointing out distinctive species characteristics that would have made it easier to identify species in the field. A unique feature of this book is the set of black and white plates illustrating nest construction for 20 species of weaver birds.

This is the first field guide to cover Western Africa exclusively, and it should enable birders to identify any species found within the 23 countries and territories covered within the text. The book is a concise, authoritative, and reasonably priced guide available from a leading university publisher that employs a critical review system. We highly recommend this must-have reference for anyone interested in the birds of Western Africa or concerned with ornithology on a worldwide basis, and/or for those who wish to augment their field guide collection. The cover design is attractive, and should catch the eye of bird lovers. The publishers should be commended for producing another excellent, reasonably priced monograph.—HARLAN D. WALLEY and PATRICIA A. RUBACK, Department of Biology,

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**RAPTORS AND OWLS OF GEORGIA.** By Rafael A. Galvez, Lexo Gavashelishvili, and Zura Javakhishvili. Georgian Centre for the Conservation of Wildlife and Buneba Print Publishing, Tiblisi, Georgia. Distributed by NHBS, United Kingdom. 2005: 128 pp., 47 color maps, 447 color illustrations. ISBN: 999407718X. £14.99 (paper). [In English and Georgian]—This is the first field guide to cover all the raptors and owls recorded in Georgia, and a first for the Caucasus region. It describes the 45 raptor species recorded in the country, including the breeding species, seasonal residents, migrants, and rare visitors. The status of each species is color-coded on an accompanying distribution map of Georgia.

The field guide has a foreword by the authors and an introductory chapter comprising several sections, the first of which is a short explanation of raptor classification. This is unusual in that it includes silhouettes of the major families of raptors and owls and explains how to distinguish them in the field. The section on “wing attitudes” is especially interesting because it shows the novice what to expect in the field under different weather conditions. The next section presents a short description of raptor migration and Georgia's role in the Palearctic flyways. There is also a section on the conservation status of nocturnal and diurnal raptors from a continental perspective, with a brief history of Georgia and a map showing the locations of Georgia's 27 protected areas. The section on how to use the book should be read carefully to gain a better understanding of the maps and accompanying symbols used in the species accounts.

Following the introductory chapter are the 45 species accounts. Each species is allocated a minimum of two facing pages. Provided on the left (text) page of each account is the species' common name (alternative additional names are listed parenthetically) and Latin names (including subspecies inhabiting Georgia), biometric data (body length, wingspan, and body mass), and the known or extrapolated number of breeding pairs in the country.